

hands abruptly, and turning her eyes upward, made me think her son right in ascribing her peculiarity of manner to heightened or erroneous views of religion. The only other inmates of the cottage were a strong, stupid young country girl, who had been sent them from the parish workhouse as a household drudge, and a very fine powerful mastiff, that went at large about the premises. Miss Polly, the gray mare, was at the time under the care of a neighboring furrier.

Mr. Johns parted with me, expressing much regret we could not prolong our stay with him. With her I parted with a look. As we rode along, Elias asked me my opinion of his father from what I had seen of him. I acknowledged I had never seen fatherly love more ~~clearly~~ shown, and only wished my own were half so affectionate. I then repeated to him the expressions of pride and admiration his father had used to me in conversation with regard to him. He was much excited.

"Yes," said he, "though we are poor in outward things, and a poor and fallen family we are, yet in the sterling wealth of warm affection, no Arab's dream ever equalled our riches."

We returned to our studies. My own powers of application I found wofully diminished since my visit to the cottage.—I could not settle myself seriously to a night's hard reading—every five minutes my eyes wore off my books, and my mind far away where, you may well know. Not so was it with my friend Elias. He confined himself almost entirely to his rooms. The hospitals he neglected—lectures he ceased to attend at all.

"Really, George," said he to me, "I begin to think it must be a much easier thing to deliver one of these lectures, than to listen to one."

The only times he stirred out, were when he went to the bookseller's—to the fields to procure frogs for his experiments, or to the market for rabbits for similar purposes.—With Dr. Q—— he was now on terms of the closest confidence, a connexion of which he was very and justly proud. In the mean time, his ignorance of everything in the public or political world was extreme. Of the meaning of the two great party names, I am sure he was quite unaware; and that, too, though political changes of immense importance was daily progressing. I remember with what words of bitter contempt he used to talk of names that were striking Europe with apprehension; what a smile he used to put on, as I would endeavor to call his attention to them.

"Hark ye, George," said he to me one day, when I was talking to him in this manner, "say no more about your victories, and such sort of things; in a short while you shall see a victory over prejudice and error—a victory that shall send down my name with honor to a posterity, that shall receive the names of your blood-shedding heroes with execration."

In a day or two after, I came to him to borrow a German book upon the brain, that was then making a considerable noise. He gave it me immediately.

"This man," said he, "shows plainly there is something in him; but how wofully does he come short of the truth! Look what a riddle I have marked it out in pencil about the function of the cerebellum! Nonsense—nonsense! Have men no eyes? The function of that organ is motion, or will, for they are the same thing—nothing but motion: it is just a galvanic battery, the plates of it are as plain as those of the pile on the table there: and yet these b———

les go guessing about, afraid as it were to come at once upon the fact. Give me down that preparation; look here, can anything be plainer?—but to give you farther proof—"

Here he caught a live rabbit, from a number he had under the window-sill, secured it, and, taking his instruments, elevated with much dexterity the back part of its cranium, so as to expose the organ alluded to. He then took a wire, and touching it in different parts, by that means made the animal move in various directions, as I desired.

I was struck with wonder and delight, and clasped his hand, saying, "Johns, you are a genius!"

He gave one of his peculiar smiles, and remained for several minutes motionless, apparently lost in thought.

"Yes," said he; "you are astonished at this experiment, but you shall soon see one that will almost make you perform that fools' act which they call worship—an act which, ere I die, I will blot out from among the follies of men."

Alas, poor fellow!

I then gathered from him, that Dr. Q—— and himself were constructing together an electrical apparatus of unprecedented magnitude, with which certain experiments of a most stupendous nature were to be performed.

"Now then," said he, "if I could just get together a hundred pounds more, I should have the right of ownership to the apparatus, and be enabled to use it at my own pleasure. I shall write home, and implore my father to get it me, by any means."

Two days after, his father called upon us, and presented him with the money.

Elias was now overjoyed; he appeared completely possessed, passing his whole time either in his own apartments or at Dr. Q——'s house, which was just in the neighbourhood.

For my own part, I went on with my studies as well as I could, thinking more of the lovely Katherine than of her strange and enthusiastic brother.

One evening, as I was sitting musing over my books, he came in; I had not seen him in my room for a month, so engrossed had he been with his new pursuit. I had never before observed him in such a state of pleasurable excitement as he was in that evening. Hardly ever before had his conversation been of a more singular and unearthly character; he could not rest, he moved about from one part of the room to another, whilst his eye burned with a wild enthusiasm. I was surprised, and when he had become more settled, inquired what had so moved him.

"To-morrow, George, our experiments begin. There are four men to be hung at the ——" (here he mentioned one of the places of public execution.) "Dr. Q—— has been and secured for our theatre the most muscular subject—it is one Bill Severn, a most notorious scoundrel as ever lived. The Doctor was going to tell me a long story about his crimes, but what did I care? all I asked was whether he was a suitable subject, and the answer was—'None could be more so;' that was enough for me. A curious thing, isn't it, that upon the body of that man, probably one of the most atrocious villains that ever disgraced his nature, will be built discoveries that will make the world ring with admiration, nay, tremble with awe?"

I may mention here, that at that time capital punishments were a hundred times more frequent than they are now. Criminals were executed then for offences that would now be expiated by infinitely minor

punishments, though from the state of society, and the want of a proper police, crimes themselves were much more numerous, and of a more aggravated description. The common rule, too, was to give the bodies of those who met their death by public execution, to the anatomical schools; a practice, that is, I believe, rightly abolished.

On his departure, which was pretty late, I endeavored to study, but could not; it seemed as if he had infected me with a portion of his excitement. I felt uneasy and racked, I could not compose myself to serious thought, and a peculiar kind of omnivorous feeling crept over me.

I went to sleep, for I had little the night before, having been out with a case. I slept, but all night long the nightmare sat upon my chest, and when I awoke in the morning, it was only by freely dashing my temples with cold water that I could bring myself to my usual state of mind.

Early in the day Elias came to me; he appeared fagged and exhausted; in fact, he had been up all the night previous with Dr. Q——, getting into order the apparatus for their experiments. He sat down till I dressed, and took a book, but immediately falling forward on the table slept deeply.

In about an hour I awakened him, when he started up, quite refreshed and vigorous; all his former spirit had returned, and he continued to converse with me in his usual strain.

We went out together, and walked along to the anatomical theatre. As we went, we could hear little knots of people talking together about the executions that were that day to take place—my ear caught frequently the name "Severn."

"That is our man," said Johns; "what a talk is made about him! Suppose now, Dr. Q——" (and he mentioned a very distinguished natural philosopher) "were to die—a martyr to science even—how many would know of it? And this is fame, George, that we all are working so hard for!"

We stopped at the corner of a street where two ballad-singers were bawling to a crowd of attentive listeners. They were exceedingly coarse, deformed-looking men, and they drawled out their song to a long melancholy tune.

It gave an account of a number of robberies and housebreakings, and a murder, I think, of a turnkey, which it detailed in the first person, beginning

Oh, William Severn is my name, in London
I d—i d—w—c—ll.

And then a doleful chorus, which yet rings in my ears—

Oh, I robb'd the rich, and did be—stow,
And give to them as vos poor and l—o—w,
But now I'm cotched, and cast to die
On the new drop at—the Old B—ni—l—e.

Johns laughed, and gave them some coppers. They touched their hats, and ceased singing, regarding us with a suspicious look as we moved away in the direction of the Medical Buildings.

Dr. X——'s anatomical theatre—I don't know whether or not it yet stands—was a very fine, large, square hall. You entered it from the wide stair on the outside, near the ceiling, and on looking down into it, could perceive a semicircular area, or open space, from which the seats rose, tier above tier, till the heads of those in the highest touched the cornice. Two stairs led down among the seats to this area. In it stood a long square table of mahogany, bound and clasped with brass. It had a number of hinges and foldings, and swung round in all directions, upon a ball-and-socket joint in its pedestal.